



# City Trees and Protected Woody Vegetation

Charlotte Tree Ordinance Sections: 21-32, 21-61.

## Definitions

- Caliper – a diameter measurement for trees, shrubs and other woody plants taken at 6" above ground level or as otherwise directed by ANSI-Z60.1 – 2014 American Standard For Nursery Stock
- *City property* – City of Charlotte-owned parcels and all Tree Canopy Preservation Program (TCPP) protected areas located in Mecklenburg County, NC.
- *Drip line* – means a vertical line running through the outermost portions of the tree crown extending to the ground.
- *DBH* – diameter at breast height. The diameter of a tree stem measured at 4.5' from the ground. On sloping ground, the measure is taken from the up-hill side.
- *Originating* – the location where the trunk/main plant stem is rooted in the ground.
- *Planted* – any tree/shrub reasonably assumed to be intentionally planted by human activity.
- *Street right-of-way (R/W)* - all segments of City-accepted and/or City Landscape Management-maintained public street R/W (CDOT or NCDOT) in Charlotte's corporate city limits. Landscape Management maintains trees on NCDOT street R/W in the city limits except for road segments identified in Tree Ordinance Guideline – City Landscape Management Maintenance Areas.

## Protected Vegetation

### 1. City Trees

#### a. Street R/W

- i. All planted trees originating on street R/W.
- ii. All trees  $\geq 3"$  DBH occurring naturally and originating on street R/W.
- iii. All trees with any part of the trunk at DBH located on street R/W, with a DBH  $\geq 3"$ .
- iv. All planted shrubs originating on street R/W.

#### b. City Property

- i. All planted and naturally occurring trees of any size on City property.
- ii. All trees located on City TCPP conservation land in Mecklenburg County, NC.
- iii. All planted shrubs originating on City property.

### 2. Enforcement

#### a. Permit

- i. Authorization in the form of a permit issued by the Office of the City Arborist is required for all tree planting, tree maintenance work and all types of land disturbing activities occurring on the R/W or on private property that may impact or encroach upon the drip line of protected City trees/vegetation.

*Land disturbing activities include but are not limited to:* driveway installations, irrigation work, tree removal, grading of any kind, and excavation. A landscape plan approved by the City's Urban Forestry Group or CIP Landscape Group may also qualify as a permit.

#### b. Property owners & Private Vegetation Encroaching on Street R/W

- i. Property owners are required to maintain private vegetation encroaching on street R/W not protected by the Charlotte Tree Ordinance per the following City codes:
  1. Part I – Charter, Chapter 7, Article VI, Sec. 7.105
  2. Chapter 10, Division 4, Sec. 10-155
  3. Chapter 19, Article VIII, Sec. 19-245

Instances of encroaching vegetation on street R/W that's not protected by the Charlotte Tree Ordinance may be forwarded to City Code Enforcement of review.

**Contact Information** - <https://charlottenc.gov/ld/treeordinance/Pages/default.aspx>

- City Arborist Group – General Services  
704-336-4262 / [Landscapemanagement@charlottenc.gov](mailto:Landscapemanagement@charlottenc.gov)
- City Code Enforcement  
Call 311 or 704-336-7600 / <https://servicerequest.charlottenc.gov/service/MISCCOMM>